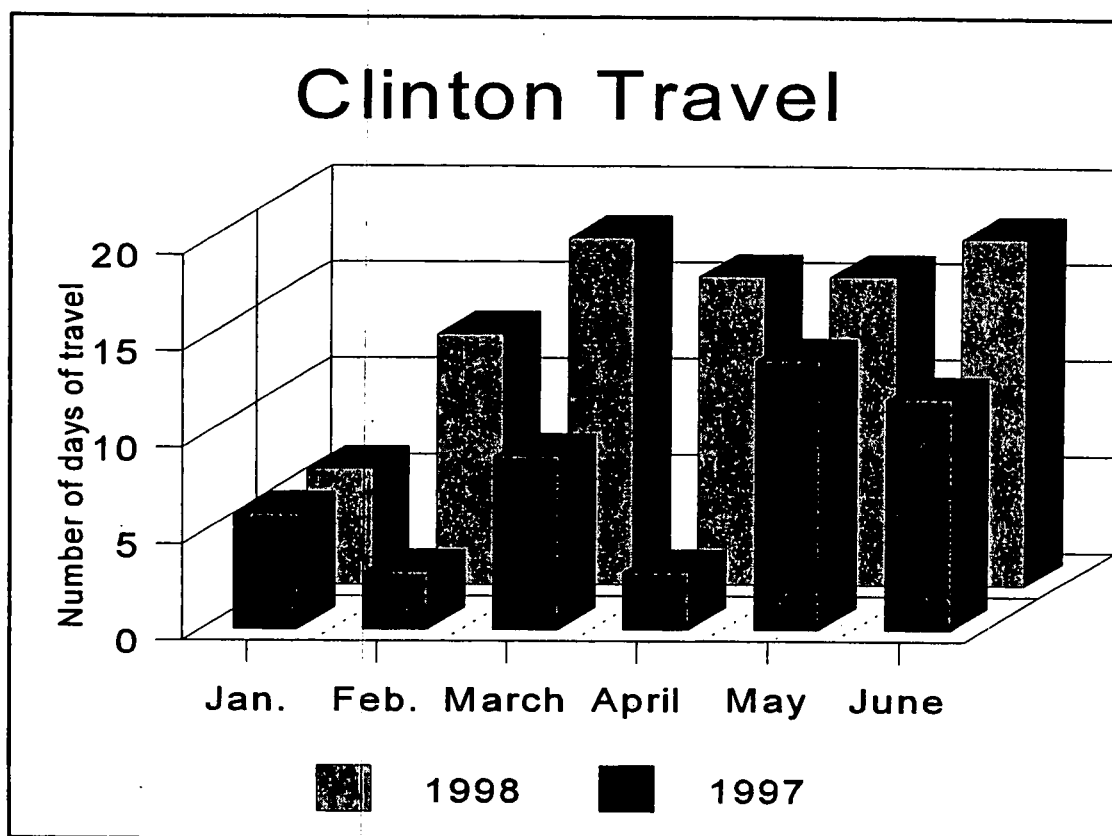


July 30, 1998

Bill Clinton, On the Road Again . . . and Again . . . and Again He's Just a Travelin' Man

President Clinton sure does like to travel. And he's been doing more and more of it this year. In the first half of 1997, Clinton was away from the White House eight days a month, on average. In the first half of 1998, this figure rose 50 percent, to 15 days per month.

Since the story broke alleging a sexual relationship between President Clinton and a White House intern, and possible obstruction of justice, the Chief Executive was on the road more than half of the days in March (18 days), April (16 days), May (16 days) and June (18 days). Compare that with the travel log of the President for those months in 1997: March (9 days), April (3 days), May (14 days), and June (12 days).



While Clinton Flies, the Senate Works

From January through June of this year, the President was away from the White House for a total of 90 days — most of which occurred from March through June. During those six months, the Senate was hard at work, debating and voting on a total of 326 items (183 rollcall votes and 143 voice votes or measures passed by unanimous consent), close to four votes (3.6) for every day the President was out of Washington.

From March through June, the President was out of town a total of 68 days, an average of 17 days each month. In those four months, Senators were in town doing the people's business and voting on a total of 166 legislative items. Furthermore, during these months, despite Democrat efforts to obstruct and stymie Senate action on important issues, the Senate completed action on a number of significant pieces of legislation. [For more on Democrat obstructionism, see RPC paper, "The Politics of Stonewalling," 7/29/98.]

March: Clinton Out of Town 18 days, Senate passes measures that:

- Improved highways and mass transit systems (P.L. 105-17)
- Condemned the People's Republic of China for human rights abuses in China and Tibet (S. Res. 187)
- Provided protection to Executive Branch employees who disclose certain classified information to Congress (Intelligence Disclosure Act, S. 1668)
- Provided disaster relief in an emergency supplemental (P.L. 105-174))

April: Clinton Away for 16 days, Senate passes the following:

- Budget Resolution that will run surpluses for each of the next five years, saving all surplus to preserve Social Security (S. Con. Res. 86)
- Education Savings and School Excellence Act, which would benefit 14 million mostly low- and middle-income families with education savings accounts, and would enact other reforms, including teacher testing and merit pay. (H.R. 2646; vetoed by President Clinton)
- Expansion of NATO (Treaty Doc. 105-36)

May: Clinton Travels for 16 days, Senate passes bills:

- Overhauling the IRS for the first time in 50 years (P.L. 105-206)
- Preventing telephone carriers from making unauthorized changes (known as "slamming") in customers' service plans (S. 1618)
- Instituting securities litigation uniform standards (S. 1260)
- Protecting churches and charities from having their assets seized because they received contributions from people in bankruptcy (S. 1244)
- Extending traditional copyright laws to cover software, movies and other electronic data (S. 2037)
- Tackling proliferation by requiring the President to sanction foreign entities which assisted Iran in its missile development efforts (H.R. 2709; vetoed)
- Reforming and consolidating job training programs (H.R. 1385)
- Providing more H-1B visas to help improve America's competitiveness (S. 1723)

Finally, during the month of June, when the President was out of town for 18 days, the Senate returned to a lengthy debate on the tobacco bill (S. 1415), conducting a total of 14 votes on that bill alone. Ultimately, that bill failed to garner enough support for passage, in part because its enactment over 25 years would have cost U.S. taxpayers close to \$900 billion.

International Travel: The President's Duty?

Some could argue, and legitimately so, that it is the President's duty to travel to foreign countries, discuss policy, and represent the great democracy that is the United States. Still, President Clinton's most recent trip to China was a policy disaster. In cozying up to China, the President damaged drastically U.S. relations with long-time ally Taiwan.

On this much-hyped trip to China, (which was made with fanfare despite China's abysmal and dangerous proliferation record, its abuse of human rights, the embarrassing deportation of journalists during the President's visit, and speculation that closer U.S./PRC ties prompted India to conduct its first nuclear explosions in 24 years), President Clinton openly accepted Beijing's position on the status of Taiwan:

"I had a chance to reiterate our Taiwan policy, which is we don't support independence for Taiwan, or 'two Chinas'; or 'one Taiwan, one China'. And we don't believe that Taiwan should be a member in any organization for which statehood is a requirement."
[As quoted in the *LA Times*, 7/1/98, and several international papers]

This blatant declaration of the "three no's" as official U.S. policy on Taiwan — the first time a U.S. President ever enunciated support for China's policy toward Taiwan — prompted the Senate to pass, with all Democrats voting with all Republicans, a resolution expressing the United States' continued support for Taiwan. What damage the President did to U.S.-Taiwan relations by his few but destructive words, the U.S. Senate tried to ameliorate by reasserting U.S. policy and support for Taiwan. The resolution made clear that the future of Taiwan be determined by peaceful means and that the United States is committed to making available defense articles and services for Taiwan's self-defense.

President Clinton's future travel plans show no sign of abating. For now, the President has five international trips scheduled to such destinations as Russia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Malaysia. And this does not include domestic travel plans. It appears the President prefers being on the road and off the job.

Staff contact: Dr. Yvonne Bartoli, 224-2946

[Travel data compiled from: National Archives and Records Administration's "Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents," 1997 and 1998.]